

CURRENT TOPICS.

LAST year's Cape diamond export value is put down at nearly \$14,000,000.

HANNIBAL HAMLIN is fishing through the ice at Katahdin Iron Works, in Maine.

PREMIER GLADSTONE favors the passage of a bill creating a Minister for Scotland.

Mrs. PHILLIPS objects to a statue of her husband. A portrait of him will be placed in Faneuil Hall.

JUDGE TOLSON has cancelled all his lecturing engagements because he is suffering from overwork and anxiety.

ARCHIBALD FORBES is said to have been very unfortunate in investing the money he has made by his correspondence.

SENATOR DON CAMERON, after his visit to Rome, expects to go to Algeria, and then through Spain. His health is improving.

LADY CAHNS has consoled Miss Fortescue for the loss of Garmaire, by giving her a Bible with sundry consolatory passages marked.

A ST. PETERSBURG correspondent thinks that the czar has not had a single good night's sleep since the crown was put on his head.

AMONG moments left by Wendell Phillips were two canes, formerly carried, one by Charles Sumner and the other by Daniel O'Connell.

MRS. VALDA, niece of Senator Morrill, of Vermont, after a long period of neglect, is becoming positively popular with Parisians as an opera singer.

CANADA contains over 400,000 inhabitants; 64,000 of whom are Baptists. Toronto has nine Baptist churches, with some 1,600 members.

LADY SIEMENS has given to the Society of Telegraphic Engineers, for its library, 230 volumes from the library of her husband, the late Sir William Siemens.

THE REV. JOSEPH COOK says there is nothing new in the announcement of Mrs. Cook's intention to lecture, since she manifested intentions of that sort for several years.

LIKE shipwrecked sailors waiting for a sail, says the Cincinnati Times-Star, the flood sufferers along the river wait anxiously for the smoke that rolls up from the relief boat.

THE first mass convention of American inventors will be held in Cincinnati, beginning on March 25. The object of the meeting is stated to be the formation of a permanent organization to protect the rights of inventors.

A WRITER in the Providence Journal says of Wendell Phillips: "As the bill of the woodpecker always penetrates to the rotten wood, so the instinct of his genius always found the available point in the political or social compact."

AN account book seized by the police of St. Louis in a poker room raided by them a few days ago showed that the clear profit over expenses to the proprietor from the percentage on the games played in the month of January was \$1,367.

THE permanent part of Montreal ends at high water mark. Below that point the construction is such that the entire area may be swept away with impunity, and after the flood is over the piers are quite as serviceable as they were before.

THE Cincinnati Times-Star remarks: Danger passes away with the receding river, but there remains the necessity for continued efforts to relieve distress. The poor whose homes have been deplored will not readily recover from the effects of the flood.

THERE is a laundry department at Trinity Church, Boston. The object is to provide work for needy women. Last year it employed, at fair wages, many who were unable, in consequence of ill health and ignorance, to compete with strong and skilled workers.

THE story that Treasurer Spinner's phenomenally crooked signature on greenbacks was made so by nervousness and fright on an occasion when a safe, containing millions of money, was left unlocked over night, is exploded by a Baltimore American correspondent, who has in his possession the general's autograph, written nearly forty years ago, and showing the same well-known peculiarities.

MISS MARIE VAN ZANT is said to be a spoiled child. Her first artistic triumphs turned her head, and she has since given to society the time she should have devoted to study. Hence she has made little if any musical progress since her appearance four years ago. But she has become a great favorite in the social world, and is welcomed in drawing rooms from which other singers and actresses are rigidly excluded.

THE National Baptist, of a recent date, furnishes the following denominational statistics: In 1781, the Baptists in America numbered 25,000; in 1810, 105,000; in 1830, 340,000; in 1850, 690,000; in 1870, 1,400,000; in 1880, 2,300,000. Thus, since 1810, we have doubled each decade. Of course, it is not always safe to gauge the future by the past, but if the same ratio be continued, there will be in 1890, 3,000,000; and in 1910, 6,000,000; and in 1930, 12,000,000. In 1810, the Baptists numbered 1 to each 44 of the population; in 1830, 1 to each 38; in 1850, 1 to each 33; in 1870, 1 to each 27; in 1880, 1 to each 22.

LIFE'S STORY.

Say, what is this life? 'Tis to be born; A helpless babe to greet the light; With a sharp wail, as if the men, Foretold a bloody noon and night; To leap, to sleep, to weep again; To be, in short, from two to ten; With sunny smiles between—and then!

And then again the infant grows To be a haughty,ughty little wren; Happy, despite his little wren; And he that's cunning of his joy; To be, in short, from two to ten; With sunny smiles between—and then!

And then in coat and trousers clad, To learn to say the decalogue, And break it, as is thinking fit; With a shrug, and a look of wit; To be, in short, from two to ten; With sunny smiles between—and then!

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THE PARSON'S CANOE TRIP.

Old Mr. Bittleson had a charming house and grounds on the Thames near Marlow, including a pretty little boat. One Sunday afternoon he was enjoying a picnic doze in a shady harbor near the water's edge, when he was aroused by the splashing of oars and beheld a young man in a boat costume in the act of alighting upon the lawn. Mr. Bittleson sprang to his feet in an instant, prepared to lose his temper on some provocation. He knew the stranger, and he had received half a dozen promiscuous visits of this kind in the course of the day. When the young man drew near he proved to be rather a mild-looking youth who wore spectacles and seemed diffident and embarrassed.

"Have I the pleasure of speaking to the proprietor of this island?" he inquired, politely lifting his straw hat from his head.

"Yes, the island belongs to me," said Mr. Bittleson.

"Will you permit me to hand you my card," said the stranger, producing a card case.

Mr. Bittleson felt somewhat mollified by the young man's polite and respectful manner. He took the card. It bore the following inscription: "The Rev. Mark Avery, 14 Haver, St. George's-in-the-East."

"Oh, you are a clergyman," remarked the old gentleman, who had a great old-fashioned regard for "the cloth."

"Yes, in spite of my dress, which is decidedly anti-clerical," said the young man, smiling. "I suppose you can guess why I troubled you. We are on our way to Oxford, and I wish your permission to camp on your island for the night with my friends."

"I am sorry to say that I am obliged to put you to bed," said Mr. Bittleson. "I am afraid I can not make an exception in your case."

"I hope you will, sir," said the parson, persuasively. "I plead not so much for myself as for my two companions. They are very worthy young men, and this little trip, which I have organized, is a pleasure which they have never before experienced. One is a pupil teacher at our schools, and the other is assistant in the night school. They have both earned a holiday, and I wish to do all I can to promote their enjoyment."

"You will find plenty of accommodation at Marlow, at all events," said Mr. Bittleson.

"Undoubtedly, but the fact is, we can not afford to pay for it," returned the Rev. Mark, candidly. "My companions have no money, and my own purse is, unfortunately, very narrow."

"Oh, then you are a paymaster," said the old gentleman, whose kind heart was touched by the parson's artless confession.

"Yes, it is my treat, in fact," answered the Rev. Mark, smiling. "Of course, if you object to our landing on your island, we must try elsewhere. But it is a convenient spot, and I hoped you would be so good as to permit us."

"Well, well, for this once I will make an exception," interrupted Mr. Bittleson, unable to resist any longer. "I must ask you to fix your camp on the most remote corner of the island, and not to damage the underwood."

"We will do nothing that can possibly offend you," returned the young man, offering his hand to Mr. Bittleson, who grasped it in a friendly fashion; "I am exceedingly obliged to you for your kindness."

"Don't mention it," said the old gentleman, walking by the parson's side across the lawn; "any little thing we can do for you, or supply you with, is only a pleasure to me. You are a fresh milk? I know that it is a commodity which is generally in request."

"Thank you. We won't trespass further on your kindness," returned the Rev. Mark, heartily. "We have our provisions."

"Would you and your companions come up and dine at the house with me to-night?" inquired Mr. Bittleson, who was a hospitable old gentleman, and had taken rather a fancy to the young man; "my wife and daughters would be pleased."

"You are a very kind man, but the fact is, my companions, though excellent young men, are not quite refined enough to sit at your table," said the Rev. Mark, candidly. "I am sure they would be a great nuisance to you."

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LIVING IN MEXICO.

Letter From An American Lady.

A Mexican kitchen, with its queer furnishings, is a study. There are no cooking stoves in Mexico or any first place like those of our grandmothers' days. One side of the room is occupied by a wide shelf, built into the wall, about breast high, in the center of which a small wood fire is kept burning. There is no wood here, however, as the Mexicans use charcoal.

The family is small, sometimes three or four, and the kitchen is a large earthen pot, and setting the smaller cooking vessels within it. In many houses a mud oven is built at one end of the shelf, or somewhere out of doors.

To heat the oven a fire is kindled in the pot, and the entrance closed with a hot stone. But as baked food enters not into the household economy, an oven is a superfluous and seldom used luxury.

The center of the kitchen stands its most important factor, the "matate," for tortilla-making. It is a hollowed stone, the ordinary bread loaf, having two stone legs, about four inches high, at one end, which incline at an angle of forty-five degrees.

"Oh, that is all right," said Mr. Bittleson, in a tone of satisfaction; "we will get back, inspector, to attend to business. I'll bring up that portmanteau, Mr. Bittleson, will you?"

"I think you mentioned my name, sir," said a voice from the lock, proceeding from one of the occupants of a room which had just entered.

"That is all right," said Mr. Bittleson, in a tone of satisfaction; "we will get back, inspector, to attend to business. I'll bring up that portmanteau, Mr. Bittleson, will you?"

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Foreign Mission Notes.

Central Baptist.

The centennial of the monthly concert of prayer for missions occurs in June. This observance, which has been held in various parts of the world, was begun by the ministers and churches of the Nottingham Baptist association, England, June 2, 1784. Perhaps this event of one hundred years ago has had a more extended influence on the history of the world than the concert of prayer, which has been the source and spur of modern missions, and Christians everywhere may well observe this centennial with gratitude for the past and hope for the future.

Evidence multiply of the increased interest which the mission churches are showing in the salvation of the heathen about them. Several associations in Burma have recently organized home mission societies, and are supporting preachers and evangelists in the distant sections of their own fields. Among the Telugus a Christian left his own village and went off among the heathen. While earning his own living he preached the gospel to his neighbors, and when the harvest season reached the village they found that about twenty had been converted, and "they had commenced to take a collection." Rev. Mr. Timpany, of Coconada, says the Telugus have been converted give more for religious purposes than they did when they were heathen, in spite of the fact that by becoming Christians they usually lose property and wages, and a new sense of decency brings now wants which they are obliged to supply.

The Kohls of Assam seem very much like the Karens of Burma in simplicity of character and readiness to receive the gospel. The little attention which has been given to them has been rewarded by many conversions. They are laborers in the tea gardens, and come from Bengal. Rev. Mr. Kandra, of Howrah, has recently baptized ten from among this interesting people, and has found a preacher who is ready to work for them, the means being provided for his support. Many of the higher castes Hindas of Assam are being convinced of the truth of Christianity, and caste prejudices are losing their hold upon the people.

The work of the American Baptist Missionary Union is extending in both China and Japan. Rev. Mr. Adams has gone to his new station, 250 miles in the interior from Tientsin, of the first Chinese mission; and Mr. Ponte finds an open door in the uncultivated districts of Manchuria, where he has laborers counting 3,000,000 people, and he has six stations among them, each of which he is obliged to travel a circuit of ten or twelve miles. On his last visit he found much to encourage him. The wide circulation of the Bible is doing much good in Japan. A few years ago no one could read the Bible in Japanese, but now it is being read by thousands. An advertisement of the American Bible Society is published in the official organ.

The baptisms reported in the Baptist Missionary Magazine for February number 16, 1,000 in Tonga, 100 in Gwanan, Assam, 10 in Northern Japan.

To Jan. 1st the American Baptist Missionary Union had appropriated for its work in various parts of the world \$3,571,341 less. The falling off of receipts is almost entirely in legacies, but this makes, with expected additions, the sum still to be raised at the end of the financial year, \$120,000, or about \$20,000 as against \$120,000 in January, February and March, 1883.

There is reason to be profoundly thankful that the worst has been passed—in the Ohio Valley, at least; but there is also reason to fear that there is yet much of desolation impending in other quarters. The situation in the valley of the Ohio is a very serious one, there is grave danger at Cairo, and below Memphis the outlook wears an unmistakably threatening tendency. There is a feeling of more severity in Louisiana than has been the case in other parts of the country, and the movements made in the levees; but how well founded this feeling is we can not know until the flood arrives and these defenses are put to actual test. With a rise no greater than that of last year, the levees of the Mississippi valley will be found equal to the emergency; but with the exceptional situation in Ohio duplicated in the lower Mississippi country, the consequences can hardly fail to be most disastrous.

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